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881 schools during two consecutive years. The first is called *bulika*, 561 the second *buhwira*. Thongas have only the first, and it is the one described in the following pages.

I was never fortunate enough to penetrate into a lodge, as it is a great taboo. I tried once to obtain admittance, near Shiluvane, but in vain. But the rites have been described to me with such a wealth of detail that I seemed to have lived for three months with the candidates ! (1)

A French anthropologist, Mr A. van Gennep, published some years ago a book on *Les Rites de Passage* (Paris. Nourry 1909) which throws a great deal of light on these mysterious customs. He shows that a great number of rites have been inspired by the idea of passage from one place to another, and that all the rites belonging to this category present the same general features : in the first place the separation from the old state of things is symbolised by certain rites which he calls separation rites ; then begins a period of margin, where the individual or the group concerned is secluded from society and submitted to a number of taboos or rites ; thirdly, at the close of this period, the persons who have been tabooed are again received into the community as regular members by the aggregation rites. This classification applies perfectly to the Circumcision rites, which are a Rite of Passage par excellence, and I shall now try to explain them briefly in their natural sequence. For more details see *Zidji*, a South African novel which I published in 1910 (Foyer solidariste, Saint-Blaise, Switzerland) where a more elaborate description will be found.

3) The three series of rites of circumcision.

a) Separation rites.

821 The circumcision school (Ngoma) is held every fourth or fifth 881 year, and all the boys from ten to sixteen are sent to it by their

(1) A young colleague of mine, the Rev. A. Jaques was more fortunate than I and even succeeded in taking some photographs in the Masume Valley, near Shiluvane, This was a Pedi school, but, as stated above, there is no great difference between Pedi and Thonga " Sungi. " These pictures are of great interest, and I am grateful to my friend for allowing me to reproduce them here.

584 mats, drinking, eating, etc. we should say : This rite is also, on the part of the diminished group, a means of asserting its importance, of saving its dignity. But the boys do the same thing on their visit. They maintain the same disdainful attitude... This certainly arises from the fact that the two social groups look upon each other with some distrust, not yet being fully acquainted, and consequently observing a mutual reserve. But further information and a closer comparative study of Thonga rites enables me to give still another explanation.

561 431 The term employed to designate this rite is *kunga*. This verb is of Ngoni (Zulu) origin. Used in a general way, it means to remit a present to a chief who has sent his emissaries to claim it. The chief "*kungisa*" viz. orders to kunga. In its ritual sense, it means to give a present to a person who refuses to do something for ritual reasons. The old Thonga expression is *alula*. This word is the reversive derivative of the verb *ala*, to refuse ; it therefore means to remove the refusal, to overcome it, to cause somebody to yield. The Kunga rite is performed on at least five different occasions : 1) for the circumcised boy on the day when he is received into the community of adults (page 93) ; 2) for the girl who has passed through the khomba initiation ; 3) for the boy who has wooed a girl, when he pays his official visit to her and to her family, and for the girl, when she returns the visit with her maids, but especially when she goes to the domicile of her husband and thus enters the married state ; 4) for the first-born child ; 5) for the woman who has lost many children and consequently is in a state of bereavement (bowumba) when she again gives birth to a child. In all these cases, the person concerned passes from one condition to another ; the circumcised from the childish to the adult stage, the suitor and his bride from the unmarried to the married state, the woman who has had her first child from the state of womanhood to that of motherhood and the bereaved woman from the state of bereavement to the normal position of a mother carrying a child on her shoulders. And here we meet with the old Bantu conception of life. This passage, in the evolution of human life, is fraught with danger. The person concerned stands on the defensive. He or she refuses to speak, to look at other people, to enter their village, or, in the case of the newly married girl, to perform her conjugal duty. Those who wish them to accept their new condition must persuade them to do so by giving them presents, generally presents of little importance, a wire bracelet, a small coin, etc. This will remove the danger.

This rite, which might be called a *defensive rite*, is therefore certainly

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561 a rite of passage and this is also proved by the fact that the money or the
731 bracelets given to the persons concerned do not remain their property. As regards the circumcised, they remit them to the chief, and the chief distributes them to the old women who are no longer able to bear children. The girl who has passed through the khomba gives them to her adopted mother, who will use them in the same way. All the money remitted to the bride will go to the master of the village, for the old women and the children. *Married people must have no share in it*, as these presents are taboo. Why ? Because they are connected with a passage, and people who have sexual relations are considered as increasing the dangers connected with these critical phases of human development, when the heart is troubled by a half-conscious fear of a new and unknown future. Amongst civilised people who have reached the era of individualism, these fears find their expression in songs and poetry. In the communistic society they express themselves by means of rites.

* * *

591 Here are some answers to the questions of Professor Frazer on
587 marriage.
611 A man always brings his wife to his own home. This is the *tlhoma*, and it is a law. It is taboo for him to go and live with his parents-in- law, at any rate when he marries his first wife. In the course of time, when the children have grown up, when the *bukoñwana*, viz. the relations with parents-in-law, are of old standing, a man can go and live in his wife's village (See Part II). Another case in which this can be done is when a widow refuses to marry the man who legally inherits her, and gives herself to a stranger, a man of Inhambane, for instance. He does not pay the lobolo, and lives with her in her village ; but the children born of that union will belong to the family of the deceased husband.

585 There is no preparation for marriage amongst the Thongas by fasting, bleeding or keeping awake the night before. No corn or rice is thrown at the bridal pair. The bride or bridegroom is never represented at the marriage by a proxy or dummy. Conjugal relations begin immediately after marriage (see page 113), but the wife does not possess her home and her kitchen for the first year ; during that period she must cook for her mother-in-law.

583 There are no occasions on which men exchange their wives.
See practical conclusions on Marriage Rites at the end of Vol. I.

701 726 regiment, with its counsellors at its head, is called in turn by the organisers of the army; (at Zihlahla they were Mahagane, the chief's uncle, and Mpompi), and the several companies of the regiments form ranks one behind the other. I have already described this imposing circle, when treating of the coronation of the chief. Every warrior can take in at a glance the entire assemblage. Seen from the interior, it is an unbroken circle of shields, resting perpendicularly on the ground, and all touching; behind, a crowd of men, the greater the number, the deeper the ranks, a forest of feathers waving above their heads.

701 726 561 534 596 The mukhumbi is not however a perfect circle. It is rather like a *horse shoe*, as there remains an *opening* (nyangwa or ngwa), which gives access into it. On either side of this *door* the regiment of the young men takes up its position; the Dhlanazo in the Nkuna mukhumbi and the Ndumakazulu in that of Zihlahla. At the opposite end, facing the entrance, is the *chest of the army* (shifuba sha yimpi), where the chief stands surrounded by the men of riper age, the strongest of whom act as a body guard. Between the chest and the opening, on both sides, the middle-aged warriors occupy the wings, the elder ones nearer the chest, the younger nearer the entrance. This disposition is highly significant; notice that it is exactly the same as that of the village itself, a large door (mharana); on both sides of the entrance, the huts of the unmarried inhabitants (lao and nhanga); at the back the huts of the headman, and, at the sides, those of his younger brothers. The idea of age and of hierarchy entirely dominates both these social manifestations!

701 As regards the numerical strength of the mukhumbi, one of my informants who belonged to the Ndumakazulu regiment —young men from 19 to 25 years old—told me that he estimated the war strength of his regiment at about 500 men: the entire Zihlahla circle might be put at 2000 strong.

I have often seen the Nkuna mukhumbi assembled. I had even the opportunity of addressing its warriors during the Sikororo war of 1901. They were between five and six hundred in all. But this clan is very much scattered and many warriors were not present.

827 surprised at this ignorance ; our forefathers, three hundred years ago, were not much more advanced than the Natives are now.

On the other hand, Bantus, and especially Thongas, have a number of physiological ideas, which are pure superstitions, being devoid of any scientific foundation, but are, nevertheless, firmly believed and give rise to a number of practices, rites, and purifications. This is a most interesting subject and its study throws much light on the condition of primitive man. I have tried to explain these physiological conceptions in an article published in "La Revue d'Ethnographie et de Sociologie, Mai 1910." It is not possible to enter into all the details here, and I am obliged to refer the reader to that article for more particulars. However my description of the Life of the Tribe would not be complete if this subject were entirely omitted ; so I will rapidly give a general idea of this curious Native physiology.

561 851 827 In the Thonga mind, human life is composed of a certain number of periods which follow each other, each having its particular character.

As we have seen in the Evolution of man (Part I), *the first period* (busahana) extends from birth to the fall of the umbilical cord ; the baby is in a state of contamination owing to the lochia and must not be touched ; from the eighth or ninth day till the weaning takes place, is *the nursing period*, divided into two or three sub-periods by the presentation to the moon and the tying of the cotton string. The child has been progressively received into human society. Up to this day he has been considered as under treatment, because a child is not a complete healthy human being ; he is but *water* (mati), not yet firm ; he is always threatened with disease and so he must continually drink his *milombyana*. The *hondlola* ceremony closes this period and, by the act of weaning, he enters into the *childhood* period. (I. p. 59).

561 827 Infancy is a *bukhuna*, a state of incompleteness fraught with a certain defilement. Childhood is also a bukhuna, and this contemptible inferiority must be removed by the circumcision rites, the significance of which is both physiological and social. When they wish to marry, viz., *to pass from the class of unmarried to that of married people*, young men and women must again

undergo a number of ceremonies of a social rather than of a physiological character. 561 827

But, in addition to these conceptions of human life, which determine so many acts and customs, there are at least *five physiological phenomena* which are believed to be attended with defilement, and which call for special precautions and rites : the menstrual flow, the lochia, disease, death and the birth of twins. To protect individuals, the family, or the clan, against these dangerous defilements, is one of the main preoccupations of any adult Thonga ; and to gain this end they submit to endless ceremonies of purification,and observe innumerable taboos ; thus it is plain that these physiological conceptions, absolutely unscientific and wrong as they are, play an immense part in their lives and cause them any amount of unnecessary trouble. 783

I need not deal at length with these five greatly dreaded physiological events. As regards menses, the subject has been treated in Vol. I, p. 187. (Compare Vol. II, p. 47) ; as regards lochia, see Vol. I, p. 43 ; concerning disease, we shall hear further in our third chapter. The tremendous contaminating power of death has been shown in the explanation of funeral rites, and the birth of twins will be studied more closely in the next chapter. The importance of these facts in the system of taboos will also be explained in Chap. IV.

The sexual act, though not considered as attended with contamination in the same manner as the five other physiological facts just referred to, is, however, subject to very characteristic restrictions. I have already explained them when dealing with conjugal life (I. p. 188). It will, however, perhaps not be superfluous to treat of this question again, considering it in its physiological aspect and in relation to the Bantu conception of Nature, and giving at the same time precise references to all the cases hitherto met with. 827 834 783

Let us first remark that, as some of my informants said, the sexual act when indulged in before marriage, by boys and girls in their gangisa (I. p. 150) has quite another bearing than when accomplished by married people. It would seem that it is not the physical act in itself which is attended with all these taboos,

idea of defilement through death. *Adultery* is taboo because the husband fears "the bad bloods" by which his wife may have been contaminated through her misconduct. In as far as respect for the *totem* is considered necessary for the maintenance of the health of the clansman, I would also include the taboos of this order in the physiological category ; these are, however, very few in number amongst the Thongas (I. p. 366). 784

b) Another variety of the same category are *the taboos connected with growth* or *change of condition*, or *with the various initiations* through which a Native may be called on to pass. The whole life of primitive man consists, as has already been stated, in a succession of stages ; he must proceed from one to the other through ceremonies in connection with which a number of taboos are to be noticed. The individual who ascends from an inferior stage to a superior one, always passes through a marginal period by which he is separated from the former and received into the latter. In this case the seclusion is not due to defilement properly speaking ; it is connected with the idea of *growth*. Hence the taboos of *tying the cotton string*, (I. p. 56), *weaning* (I. p. 58), when passing from infancy to childhood, *puberty*, when entering upon adult life through circumcision, *marriage* (p. 124), when being received into the group of married people ; initiation into the society of the possessed, and into the profession of magician, or diviner, is attended with similar taboos. 561 784

All the taboos of this category seem to have been actuated by the idea of danger accompanying ritual impurity, or passage from one condition to another.

2) A second category of taboos, much less numerous, are the *cosmic taboos*. Nature prohibits certain acts ; if they are committed, rain will not fall, and the community will suffer. The prohibition of cutting the roots at the new moon (p. 306), of tilling the fields when a shower falls in the morning (p. 28), of warming oneself at a fire of parasitic plants and at the ntjhopfa (p. 18), and some agricultural taboos belong to this category. Some of the most severe physiological taboos, those connected with twins and with unlawfully buried children, become cosmic, inasmuch as they prevent rain from falling (p. 317). 821 784